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Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities

Statement submitted by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Council of North and South America, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2005/100.

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Eradicating poverty

Education is the key to eliminating poverty around the world.

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Council has been successful in building schools, health clinics and establishing local businesses in villages in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe — all with private donations and with teams of volunteer teachers, doctors, nurses and construction workers.

Abeer, a woman from Kafi Dam, West Bank, who has participated in Orthodox Christian Charities programmes stated that having had the opportunity to learn had transformed her life. Her self-worth and the respect of her community had come with the education and skills she had acquired in that forgotten village. These efforts have focused on education for all men, women, and children, as well as on women's empowerment and job creation. Orthodox Charities continues to focus on education and skills training based on the conviction that sustainable development comes with knowledge.

This is the best example of how progress is achieved in the grass roots of societies. Therefore we conclude that non-governmental organizations should work in partnership with Governments and businesses to achieve the goal of establishing education for all in villages around the world by providing funds, textbooks, equipment and training directly to the villages, as well as providing local expertise and promoting anti-corruption initiatives. This would have a trickle-up effect, rather than a trickle-down effect, which, unfortunately, is usually prey to corruption.

How to advance recommendations on a Millennium Development Goal-based approach to poverty reduction

In order to achieve the far-reaching Millennium Development Goals, a set of anti-poverty targets agreed to by world leaders at a 2000 United Nations Summit, Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposed on 21 March 2005 that all developed States allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross national income to official development assistance no later than 2015. Since many United States of America NGOs, United States individuals such as Bill Gates and Ted Turner, and United States corporations such as McGraw-Hill, make huge donations to developing countries, the Secretary-General's proposal of the allocation of 0.7 per cent of a country's gross national income should also include the donations of these private donors. This would make the amount of the United States contribution to development assistance more realistic.

Freedom of fear

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Council endorses the Secretary-General's call to work together to prevent catastrophic terrorism, stop proliferation of deadly weapons, end civil wars and build lasting peace in war-torn countries.